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In response to a [2012 petition](#) claiming 53 reptiles and amphibians require federal protection under the Endangered Species Act, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) today published a batch of 90-day findings affecting 15 species of frogs, salamanders, snakes, skinks and crayfish found in the Southeast. Five petitioned species will not be given further consideration for federal protection at this time, and 10 species have triggered a deeper scientific review.

A 90-day finding is the Service's first step in assessing whether the plants and/or animals identified in a petition may require federal protection. A "substantial" finding triggers a closer look at the species' status, also known as a 12-month finding. A "not substantial" 90-day finding marks the final decision point for a species, indicating that the actions requested in a petition were not substantiated by the petitioner.

Service biologists found the petition, submitted by the Center for Biological Diversity, failed to provide substantial information indicating that the petitioned action was warranted for the following species. They will therefore not be given further consideration for federal protection at this time:

- Blue Ridge gray-cheeked salamander in North Carolina
- Caddo Mountain salamander in Arkansas
- Pigeon Mountain salamander in Georgia
- Weller's salamander in North Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia
- Wingtail crayfish in Florida.

"The Service bases decisions on the best available science at the time of the petition while ensuring transparency throughout the decision-making process," said Cindy Dohner, Southeast Regional Director. "For those petitions that will move on to a more in-depth review, that process will include the opportunity for significant input from states, partners, stakeholders, and the public."

Substantial findings were published for 10 species. The Service will seek to collect additional information for a more thorough review of the following animals:

- Alligator snapping turtle in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas
- Apalachicola kingsnake in Florida
- Cedar Key mole skink in Florida
- Gopher frog in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee
- Green salamander found in Alabama, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia
- Illinois chorus frog in Arkansas, Illinois and Missouri
- Key ring-necked snake in Florida
- Rim Rock crowned snake in Florida
- Southern hog-nosed snake in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South

Carolina

- Spotted turtle in Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts, Maryland, Maine, Michigan, North Carolina, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Virginia, Vermont, Washington DC and West Virginia.

Organizations or individuals that wish to present scientific and/or commercial information on these species should contact Andreas Moshogianis at (404) 679-7119 or andreas_moshogianis@fws.gov.

For more details on the Service's current analysis of each of these species, please visit our information page, <http://www.fws.gov/southeast/candidateconservation/june-2015-batch/>

To view the complete *Federal Register* notice, visit

<https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2015/07/01/2015-16001/endangered-and-threatened-species-90-day-findings-on-31-petitions>.

For more information on the 90-day finding process, visit <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/what-we-do/listing-petition-process.html>

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